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IDEAL BEAUTY.

THE numerous hypotheses of beauty that have been submitted from time to time to the world have not yet resulted in any undoubted theory; yet each attempt to penetrate the mystery which hangs over the subject must serve more or less to refine and elevate. Anything that withdraws us, in our reflective moments, from the materialism of circumstances, must aid the advancement of civilisation; for civilisation does not consist in the *perfectionnement* of the mechanical arts of life, but in the cultivation of the higher faculties of which the senses are but the agents and ministers. The splendid inventions and endless applications of the present age would obtain for it merely the praise of ingenuity; but the simultaneous diffusion with these of a taste for poetry, music, and art, stamps the epoch as a period of indubitable progress.

The analysis even of so ethereal a thing as beauty is no more impossible to one class of philosophers than that of light has proved to another; and the former, in all probability, depends upon laws as simple as those of the latter: for the principles of nature are few and universal. The time has gone by when the mystery of beauty was committed wholly to the researches of the metaphysician, and some inquirers seem now inclined to revert even to those earlier dogmas which placed the secret in the keeping of the exact sciences. It has long been known that the Egyptian sculptors reduced proportion within such definite rules, that the parts of a single statue might be executed by different artists; and the school of Pythagoras—who studied in Egypt—taught that the foundation of proportion, both in sculpture and architecture, was geometry. This is a question, however, too weighty and too curious to be entered into parenthetically, and we shall reserve it for a future occasion, when we propose examining at large the contributions of D. R. Hay to the philosophy of art.

Ideal beauty, a higher branch of the same subject, was still farther removed from the grasp of the judgment. Its discussion was supposed to be the province of the poets and transcendentalists; and when actually met with in high art, it was set down as the result of a special inspiration which had nothing to do with the vulgar laws of nature. Ideal beauty, however, is now pretty generally acknowledged to be a real existence, in which the efforts of nature in the creation of the perfect are merely concentrated by the master in a single figure. The same thing, we would remark, occurs in landscape painting, and is there considered no mystery at all. The artist in this case does not copy, but select from nature. He imagines such a combination of circumstances as never occurred in union, though all real in themselves, and thus produces out of actually existing materials a scene of ideal beauty.

Let us only suppose what the result would be of the introduction of a feature that was *not* natural into the ideal of the human form. The piece would be at once condemned as 'out of drawing'; in other words, it would be stigmatised as wanting in the first principle of art. Such views of the question would seem to imply that the great artist must be deeply learned in the arcana of knowledge, and it may be asked how, in this case, it happened that the ancients—of a time when learning, such as it was, was confined to a few—have been the masters of more generally enlightened generations, and that their unapproachable works are still the objects of the 'fond despair' of the modern world? The answer is easy: That inborn genius is the teacher, or rather inspirer of art. Thus Homer had no education in the common sense of the word—and neither had Burns; yet both, in certain departments of the sister art, stand unrivalled and alone. These, however, are the cases of individuals, occurring with an interval of 3000 years; and the collateral inquiry remains—under what circumstances was this divine quality developed among a whole people at one time, and what led to its decay and final extinction? At this point the work which has suggested the train of thought we are indulging comes to our assistance, and—though not without some precautions—we put ourselves under the guidance of a masterly writer, but occasionally an incorrect thinker.*

The climate of Greece is supposed to have had some influence in forming the happy disposition of the people. 'Here,' says Winckelmann, 'where a temperature prevails which is balanced between winter and summer, nature chose her central point; and the nigher she approaches it, the more genial and joyous does she become, and the more general is her influence in producing conformations full of spirit and wit, and features strongly marked and rich in promise.' In such a climate physical man acquires his fullest development, and physical beauty its richest character; and in such a climate the powers of depiction and imagination would be in equal proportion with the glorious materials they had to work with. But too much importance, we think, is attached to this idea. Climate does not in other countries generate genius, although it may develop form; and, as regards the fine arts, our author forgets that the palmy period of sculpture, if we begin with Phidias, did not last for more than fifty years; and that the painting of the early Greeks, exemplified in the works of Apollodorus, Xeuxis, and Apelles, of which not a fragment has been preserved, exists only in the traditionary praises of Lucian, Pliny, and Ausonius.

But the climate of Greece was not too cold to repress

* The History of Ancient Art among the Greeks. Translated from the German of John Winckelmann, by G. Henry Lodge. London: John Chapman. 1856.

the animal spirits, nor too warm to enervate. The people did not, like more western nations, shroud their forms in heavy clothing, nor, like more eastern, commit the manly and graceful exercises to slaves and hirelings. The richest, noblest, and wisest strove in the public games, and the taste for beauty in the human form grew by what it fed on. In their histories, they mention with applause those whom this quality distinguished as favourites of the gods; women contended publicly for the prize of beauty; the Spartan matrons placed in their sleeping-rooms the images of the most graceful deities; and even men were known by a name derived from some perfection of shape or feature. Of these last one received an appellation which has been transferred in meaning, by the different genius of English poetry, to the fairer sex:—

—‘A thousand graces sat
Under the shadow of her even brows.’

This love of beauty was conjoined with gentle hearts and joyous dispositions. Kindly in peace, and humane in war, they formed a remarkable contrast to their future masters, the Romans; and when it was first proposed to introduce the gladiatorial exhibitions of the latter at Corinth, some horrified Greek observed that they must first throw down the altars of Mercy and Pity.

The attention of this beauty-loving people was early turned to sculpture as a means of perpetuating the memory of the charms they almost worshipped. Statues became the universal expression not only of admiration, but even of family affection. Mothers set up the images of their children in the temples; and whole towns and provinces joined in honouring in this manner the victors at the public games. The sculptors were the sole bestowers of that enduring fame which mortals call immortality. Philosophy and literature were subordinate to art; and to obtain a prize beyond what these could give, Pythagoras contended at Elis, and Plato appeared among the combatants at the Isthmian and Pythian games. Such statues were always portraits, and so likewise were the representations of the successful horses at the chariot-races. Even the superstition of the Greeks contributed to dignify art. The early images of the deities, whose authors were unknown, were supposed to have fallen from heaven; and even those by known artists were understood to be filled with the godhead they represented. How sensibly must the honour in which art was held have acted upon the artists! The contentions for the prizes of beauty and skill must have been tame in comparison with those of genius.

Let it be understood that the praises bestowed upon a successful artist, universal as they were, were no vulgar and ignorant outcry of fashion. The learning and wisdom of the time were comprised within a small compass, for there were few books to study, and a brief space, therefore, sufficed for all necessary culture. Men did not require to grow gray in thought before they were considered competent to lead the nation; and thus we hear of mere lads gaining battles; of a commander-in-chief of the age of twenty-four; and of the chief of the Achaean League—Aratus—being scarcely twenty. It is curious to remark the recurrence of this phenomenon in our own day in England, though arising from a very different cause. The present is the age of extraction and simplification. The multitude of books that have inundated the world are all robbed, by a process of distillation, of their actual spirit; and the result is presented to the new generation in a cheap, attractive, and intelligible form. It is almost as easy now to be wise and learned as it was in ancient Greece; and thus we see every day young men stepping forward into public life from the most uncongenial positions, and displaying a readiness and familiarity in business which were formerly supposed to be the exclusive attributes of mature years and prolonged study.

We now come to the crowning influence which carried Grecian art to perfection. This was the lofty spirit of independence which secured in most ages the freedom of the country. ‘The freedom,’ says Winckelmann, ‘which gave birth to great events, political changes, and jealousy among the Greeks, planted, as it were, in the very production of these efforts, the germ of noble and elevated sentiments. As the sight of the boundless surface of the sea, and the dashing of its proud waves upon the rocky shore, expand our views and carry the soul away from, and above, inferior objects, so it was impossible to think ignobly in the presence of deeds so great and men so distinguished.’ So long as Greece was free, or even underwent brief vicissitudes of tyranny, art continued to advance till it attained to perfection; but when the country fell permanently under the Roman yoke, art gradually expired. It is a plant to which light and air are necessary, and if transferred to a dungeon, it withers and dies.

It must not be supposed that the period of perfection of which we have spoken dawned all at once. The germ of genius was in the national mind, but it required time to develop itself; and manifold were the efforts of sculpture in the interval between the representation of Castor and Pollux by two wooden posts with a cross-beam at the top, and the production in marble of ‘the statue which enchants the world.’ The statues of the victors in the games, as we have observed, were portraits, and so likewise may have been those of the priests and priestesses of the temples; but the images of the gods were creations of ideal beauty, or that perfection of beauty which surpasses nature, inasmuch as it concentrates her scattered gifts in a single form. But the fine imagination of the Greeks did not stop here. They revelled in beauty with a kind of intoxication; and in the images of certain gods, such as Apollo and Bacchus, as well as in the Hermaphrodite statues, they blended the forms of the two sexes, and thus composed out of nature’s own materials an imaginary being peculiarly their own. But let us hear the description of our German enthusiast of one of the ideals of the Greeks: ‘I could wish in this place,’ says he, ‘to describe beauty the like of which can hardly have had human origin. It is a winged genius in the villa Borghese, of the size of a well-made youth. If the imagination, filled with the single beauties everywhere displayed in nature, and occupied in the contemplation of that beauty which flows from God, and leads to God, were to shape during sleep a vision of an angel, whose countenance was brightened by the divine effulgence, and whose form was seemingly an effluence from the source of the highest harmony—in such a form let the reader set before himself this lovely image. It might be said that nature, with God’s approval, had fashioned it after the beauty of the angels.’

This high and holy quality of beauty has been long the subject of controversy. Men have sought to embody it in a definition, and numerous theories have been propounded, by which the authors imagined that they had solved the problem. It is natural that we should wish to know *what* it is we unconsciously admire, and *why* it is that we do so; but no explanation has as yet been made public that can satisfy the judgment or engage permanently the attention. One of the latest adventurers in this difficult field is Winckelmann himself; but although his premises are indisputable, and his sketch of the history of the beautiful in art both striking and correct, he has been no more successful than his predecessors. Indeed the question of ‘what is beauty?’ seems to have been abandoned as hopeless, and both Winckelmann and Haydon, after floundering from obscurity to obscurity, have been satisfied with telling us *where* beauty is. The former supposes it to reside in the youthful form, ‘in which everything is, and is yet to come—appears, and yet does not appear,’ and where ‘the conformation is, as it were, suspended between youth and maturity.’ He does not deny its existence in other periods of life; but youth is the grand central

point, and the farther from this the rays of beauty diverge, the fainter they become.

To this dogma it has been objected, that in the works of the ancients themselves—more especially in the Venus, the second daughter of Niobe—the palm is clearly seen to belong to maturity. But we venture to impugn it on wider grounds. Even supposing beauty to be confined to the human form, it belongs to all ages and states—even to declining years—even to death itself. In the latter it perhaps reaches its acmé, and the 'rapture of repose' we see in the coffin before the commencement of decay, is more lovely than the brightest flush of youth. But beauty is not confined to the human form: it is a universal principle, which pervades all nature; and the dogma which assigns it to a particular period of man's life must be tried by its application to every other object and condition which exhibits the phenomena of youth and decay. Winckelmann's idea, therefore, we condemn as unphilosophical; and for the same reason that of Haydon, who declared that beauty resides only in the female form; and that when seen elsewhere, in any individual of the whole animate world, it is in exact proportion to the resemblance of that individual to woman.

The most curious, however, of all theories of beauty is, we believe, the latest—the one propounded by Dr Knox, and now reproduced in an appendix to his translation of Dr Fau's work on anatomy.* 'All those beauteous and perfect external forms,' says he—'this decorated exterior, which nature intended man to see, concealing from him the machinery lying beneath the surface—owes its beauty to many circumstances, which I need not here further refer to, but chiefly as a *sine qua non* to the *cellulo-adipose elastic layer interposed between the integument and the aponeurotic sheaths and muscles*.' Here are words to conjure with! But lest the reader should turn over the leaf in dismay, we shall explain that our author means simply to say that beauty mainly consists in the concealment of the internal structures of the human frame. This theory, he says, 'is based on transcendental anatomy, and on an analysis of human feelings and instincts. Apply it to the living model, and test its truth; apply it to modern sculpture; above all, to the antique, from a profound study of whose sculptured forms I first drew the materials of this work.'

Such are the notions of a professional anatomist, to whom the play of a muscle in the graceful attitudes of youth, or the course of a blue vein over a virgin bosom, recalls the horrible mysteries of the dissecting table! But to the uninitiated such muscular movements, even when unpleasing from their extravagance, suggest nothing to disgust; and such meandering veins are, and always have been, nothing less than poetical. When a blush rises into the ingenuous face, we do not associate it with a determination of blood; a smile receives no illustration in our fancy from the demonstrations of the knife; and a tear suggests to us no hint of the analysis or organs of the secretion. Dr Knox, however, though wrong in theory, is right as to practice. In youth, the muscles and sinews are far from being obtrusive, either in the living model or the statue, and they are but little obvious in the ideal beauty of the ancients even when it refers to maturity. The reason is, that tranquillity and repose were the grand principles of the old sculptors' art. Even the dancing nymphs do their spiriting gently; Laocoon's sufferings, though agonizing, are mute; and the daughters of Niobe are as still as the death they dread. This was one of the most remarkable characteristics of Grecian art, and it is the one most commonly disregarded by the moderns, with whom all is excitement and extravagance. In Greece it arose out of the national manners, at a

time when hasty walking or hurried speaking was reckoned a vulgarity, and when a calm, self-possessed manner indicated high-breeding.

Dr Knox having told us what beauty is, proceeds, like his predecessors, to show where it resides; and here he agrees so far with Haydon, although giving it a more limited range. 'The absolutely beautiful,' says he, 'I place in the full-grown woman only, in that figure whose fully-developed proportions satisfy the most fastidious taste for form; whose expression no language can describe, yet is understood by all; in whom the emblems of ever-blooming youth—that youth so cherished, so loved, so adored—still remain, thus combining all possible attractions.' If such mean and restricted views could be accepted at all, this one is certainly the most natural and probable.

It will not be supposed that where so many men of genius have failed, we shall hazard an opinion with any confidence, or with anything but hesitation and humility. It strikes us, however, that the cause of the failure may lie in the want of elevated views both of nature and art—views apart from the enthusiasm, real or pretended, of connoisseurship; and we may venture, therefore, to offer a suggestion which has but little reference to learning or study.

The writers we have mentioned, as well as others who preceded them, describe the chief component parts of beauty as consisting of proportion, colour, and expression. But if you detach from a thing any one component part, you leave it imperfect: in the chemistry of nature, for instance, such withdrawal, in the case of the gases that compose air and water, would destroy the whole animated world. How does this apply to art? The masterpieces of the ancients, the exponents to all mankind of the idea of beauty, are generally in discoloured marble, sometimes in bronze—where, then, is colour as a component part? If expression were detached from them, is it not obvious that this would change merely the moral character, without affecting in the smallest degree the physical beauty? What remains is neither marble nor bronze: it is proportion. If so, Proportion is Beauty. If the living model, however finely formed, were, by some caprice of nature, to appear of a green colour, it would still be beautiful to the eye of taste, however abhorrent to the natural instincts. We have a strong suspicion that it is the confounding of taste with instinct which has restricted the views on this subject of so many talented men, and which, more especially, has imprisoned beauty in the youthful and female forms.

That the Greeks possessed mathematical rules of art—a supposition which is sneered at by Dr Knox—we have no doubt; and the fact is rendered probable by a circumstance adverted to by himself as well as others—namely, the absolute identity, in feature and character, of all the statues of the same god. This identity is so remarkable, that if the whole of one of these sculptures were lost with the exception of a portion of the hair, the deity represented could be at once distinguished by a connoisseur! But setting aside this question, which, as we have said, will be the subject of a future paper, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that mathematical rules could enable the artist to give the Vatican Apollo his cloudland step, or the Atalanta her gliding motion. Such rules are, as it were, the body of beauty, but genius breathed into it a living soul. We have seen by what happy combinations and coincidences this genius was able to develop itself in the Greeks; but with nations different from them in climate, constitution, religion, manners, and freedom, the process will not be the same. The feeling of ideal beauty is not an instinct. It must come by study, by meditation, by abstraction from low desires. It must come with the great truth that beauty, so far from being confined to persons and places, is universal and ubiquitous. It must come with the power to separate it from the association of a passion with which it has no necessary connection—the passion of love.

* The Anatomy of the External Forms of Man, intended for the Use of Artists, Painters, and Sculptors. By Dr J. Fau. Edited, with Additions, by Robert Knox, M.D. With an Atlas of Twenty-Eight Plates. 4to. London: Baillière. 1849.

We cannot conceive how any person capable of appreciating high art can contemplate the masterpieces of the ancients with any reference to earthly passion, or look upon the beauty with which they are clothed as any other than a portion of the beauty with which God has clothed the universe—the beauty which marks it as his own, by the consanguinity there naturally exists between the master and his work. The educated and enlightened African may comprehend this beauty, but he will not love the less fondly his dusky wife and the dark imps she has given him. Among ourselves, the lover and his betrothed may gaze enraptured, and together, upon the Medicean Venus, but no thought will arise in the mind of either as to the possibility of a dangerous comparison being suggested between the woman and the goddess. It is possible, in the progress of ages, that as the population of the world becomes more and more intermixed, the style of beauty may approximate more and more to the Greek model; but in each passing age the various races and countries will be governed in their sympathies, as at present, by laws of their own. Thus in England the chiselled face may be an object of delight and admiration, but love will far more readily be inspired by the moulded features of the Anglo-Saxon physiognomy.

To conclude: ideal beauty is simply the highest beauty in nature; and although it may be comprehended intuitively by genius, we must approach it in ordinary circumstances through the cultivation of taste. In making this approach, we rise in general refinement and enlightenment; for nothing mean or base may draw near that divine presence. Governments would do well to understand this. They would do well to familiarise the million with the works in which beauty resides. They would do well, with views analogous to those of the Spartan matrons—who set up in their sleeping-rooms an Apollo, a Bacchus, a Nereus, or a Narcissus—to place as many of the masterpieces of art as they can collect before the people, to the end that they may bring forth great thoughts and noble deeds. L. R.

THE REJECTED HEIRESS.

It is a commonplace saying that truth is frequently more wonderful than fiction; and few persons who have lived long in the world are unprepared to admit this from their own experience or observation. Yet when one of these out-of-the-way episodes actually occurred in the retired village of Sunnisdie, the good folks exclaimed, 'Well-a-day! who would have believed it possible?'

Old Mrs Armitage had succeeded to a large fortune; and the Witch of Sunnisdie, as some called her, was whisked away from among them in a carriage-and-four, accompanied by a man of law, to take actual possession of a grand house, situated in a distant part of the country. This was one of those extraordinary windfalls which we sometimes read or hear of. Mrs Armitage had been advertised for, and proved to be nearest of kin to a deceased miser, of whom she had scarcely ever heard in her life. She was the widow of a petty government officer, and a trifling pension was all she had had to subsist upon—her only daughter, rather more than twenty years previously, having married a farmer about emigrating to the new world. All the neighbours pitied Farmer Smith for the burthen he had voluntarily imposed on himself—the burthen of such a wife as Ellen Armitage—who inherited from her mother the shrewish propensities and scolding tongue of a handsome Shaksperian Kate, though it seemed highly improbable that her gentle, submissive husband, would ever attempt to 'tame the shrew.' Moreover, Ellen Armitage had married against her mother's consent, and they parted in violent mutual anger, never to meet again in this world; for the first accounts that reached Mrs Armitage were, that the ship in which her daughter had embarked had foundered within sight of its distant destination, and nearly all on board were lost.

Amongst the passengers who perished were Mr and Mrs Smith. The mother's grief at first was extreme; for she remembered only the part she had acted towards her only child, without thinking of the part that child had acted towards *her*—for so it often is when death cancels wrongs.

Nevertheless, when her grief abated, Mrs Armitage was just the same as ever—notorious for her unkindly disposition and ungovernable temper. She dwelt in a small cottage on the outskirts of the village, where she had only two fine black cats for companions; and in former days it is very certain that this circumstance, coupled with her unsocial habits, might have aided the suspicions entertained against her as a dealer in forbidden arts. The young Mrs Armitage detested; the old she quarrelled with; and she had not a friend in Sunnisdie, if we except little Rollo Lilligood, the shoemaker and cobbler. But who on earth could have disliked or quarrelled with Rollo?—the merriest, kindest, best, most single-hearted soul in the universe! He was the sole privileged visitor at Mrs Armitage's solitary cottage; he read to her on a Sabbath; he bore her animadversions and scoldings with unshaken fortitude and philanthropy; and though constantly ejected from the inhospitable roof with ungracious vituperations, he always found his way back again, meek and gentle, as if sure of a loving welcome. And Rollo Lilligood did all this because, he said, Mrs Armitage was to be pitied—that we ought to return good for evil, bear with one another, and visit the widows in their affliction. 'And was not an evil temper an affliction?' said Rollo. The worthy little shoemaker of Sunnisdie was a widower; and though only about forty years of age himself, he had a son—his sole treasure—who was now in his nineteenth year. Rollo had married early and improvidently; but when he lost his young wife four years after their union, he looked upon her obscure grave, and felt that life was now a weary pilgrimage indeed. The village shoemaker mourned as sincerely for his lost love as any 'gentleman' of the land might do for his; and placing all his hopes on a future reunion, Rollo devoted himself to his calling, being thereby enabled, by unflinching diligence and perseverance, to give his son a decent education. The village schoolmaster was a man of good ability and judicious management; and young Rollo amply profited by both, inheriting some natural capacity and the blessing of a sweet disposition.

The attachment of this father and son was beyond that usually evinced even by such sacred and near relationship. Young Rollo resembled his lost mother in personal appearance—being tall, fair, and delicately formed, with a winsome countenance and a sunny smile. Many a village maiden looked after the handsome young cobbler with a sigh, for he was perfectly impervious to all their charms and allurements. Serious far beyond his years, thoughtful far beyond his station, caring only for books and rambles amid the beauties of nature when the day's work was ended, he neither frequented the dance, the revel, nor the alehouse, and yet gave offence to none: for Rollo was the most generous, brave, yet resolute and mild youth ever bent on having his own way. Young Rollo was a frequent visitor also at Mrs Armitage's; but his reception was even more equivocal than his father's. Mrs Armitage seemed to have a peculiar spite against the comely, as well as against the youthful, and taunted him about his 'love-locks' and 'book learning'; but Rollo patched the crabbed old lady's shoes gratuitously in return, fondled the cats, and oft-times trimmed up the neglected garden before the cottage.

There seemed little outward alteration in Mrs Armitage on hearing the astounding tidings which created such a sensation throughout the village; her black eyes twinkled more brightly, and she planted her stick more firmly when hobbling about; but when the neighbours dropped in—gathering courage from curiosity—she vouchsafed no information, and snappishly cut short all inquiries. Mr Temple, the lawyer, whose client Mrs

Armitage had now become, was, fortunately for the ignorant and foolish old woman, a man of the highest worth and probity; the affairs of the miser deceased were entirely in his hands; and the vast wealth passing over to Mrs Armitage was under his superintendence and jurisdiction. Mr Temple soon found that he had no easy matter to manage, for the old woman was self-willed and dictatorial in the extreme, and baffled all the lawyer's tact and prudence, in his endeavours to gain her confidence and good-will, by sharp and vulgar suspicions and retorts. But ere her departure for her new residence, Walsley Hall, Mrs Armitage was made aware that she had it in her own power entirely to will away her wealth to whom she pleased. On hearing this from Mr Temple, she struck her staff violently on the ground, and compressed her lips, as if forming an unalterable resolution, at the same time requesting Mr Temple to keep the knowledge 'to himself.' When the chaise containing the lawyer and his client disappeared on the winding road above Sunnyside (which basked in a pleasant watered valley), there was not one left behind to lament the old woman's departure, or to rejoice in her singular good fortune, except the little shoemaker, Rollo Lilligood; and perhaps he felt somewhat as a doctor may do on the loss of a fractious patient. Mrs Armitage had spoken kinder words when saying 'adieu' to Rollo Lilligood than might have been expected from her general demeanour: 'I'll send you a good round order, neighbour, when I get to Walsley; and you shan't patch and cobble for *nothing* now,' she screamed after the little man as he left the cottage, where for so many years he had ministered with patient Christian love.

Many months passed away, and the inhabitants of Sunnyside had almost forgotten Mrs Armitage and her singular history; the cottage she had inhabited was tenanted by tidy, cheerful-working folks, and no trace remained either in the aspect of the habitation or in the hearts of the villagers to recall the cross and disagreeable old woman to their memories. Rollo Lilligood had not received the promised order, and he *was* disappointed; for, truth to tell, the humble, disinterested creature had built some castles in the air—not for himself, but for his dear boy—the extent of his hopes being limited to perhaps receiving a present of books, or something of that sort, through Mr Temple's instrumentality, that gentleman having taken great notice of young Rollo when sojourning at the Sunnyside Arms.

But Rollo was a contented man, nevertheless, and he diligently attended to his business; settling in his own mind that prosperity had had the not unusual effect of making his former neighbour forget the associates of her poverty. But he was mistaken in his surmises, for Mrs Armitage, with all her unamiable qualities, yet retained a recollection of his kindness, and had speedily evinced that she did so by notifying to Mr Temple her desire of making Rollo *senior* her sole heir! The will was drawn out in due form, Mr Temple being handsomely remembered in it for his valuable services, and Rollo Lilligood, shoemaker of Sunnyside, appointed sole residuary legatee. Mrs Armitage determined that he should not be made acquainted with his good fortune during her lifetime—he must work, and his delicate son must work; but Rollo had been her only real friend, and she had no one else in the wide world to care 'one brass farthing for,' as she expressed it. Whatever were Mr Temple's feelings on the subject, he did not disclose them—his honour was chivalrous; and had the obstinate old dame selected him for her heir, he would probably, in the circumstances he stood in towards her, have scrupled to avail himself of the advantage.

Mr Temple had an ample private fortune besides his professional gains: he was a widower, with an only child (a fair and amiable daughter), and when he undertook the management of Mrs Armitage's affairs, no idea of self-aggrandisement entered his honest head. His client had a vast deal of low cunning—that kind of cunning which is often apt to look upon lawyers as over-

reaching and unscrupulous, simply because they *are* lawyers; and Mrs Armitage watched all Mr Temple's movements most narrowly, little thinking that her scrutiny was observed by him, and that he was greatly amused by this development of character, making much allowance for her ignorance and consequent prejudices. He felt glad that she had sufficient gratitude in her nature to propose rewarding the tried friend of former times; and when the worthy shoemaker's son came before his mind's eye, Mr Temple determined to interfere thus far—to leave no stone unturned in trying to persuade Mrs Armitage to enable this promising young man to prosecute his studies under competent tuition, so as eventually to fit him for adorning that station to which the wealth she proposed bequeathing his father must raise him. Mr Temple had a hard battle to fight. Mrs Armitage contended that Rollo *junior* was 'learned enough already': she wanted no 'would-be gentleman' to succeed to the inheritance; and it was to *his father*, not to *him*, that she left it.

Still, Mr Temple persevered; and beneath the magical sway of his urbanity and good management, something almost resembling equanimity began to exhibit itself in his client's sour demeanour, while order and propriety reigned at Walsley. Suddenly, however, all Mr Temple's plans were frustrated by the unexpected arrival of a stranger on the scene of action, whose credentials admitted of no dispute, and whose influence became all-predominant. In the meantime Rollo Lilligood, fortunately perhaps for his peace of mind, was wholly in the dark as to all these proceedings and arrangements in his favour, consequently disappointment reached him not; and when he received a letter desiring his immediate presence at Walsley *alone*, he had no doubt that Mrs Armitage was on the point of death, and wished him to read those pleasant words of comfort from the Holy Book which he used to do on the quiet evenings and Sabbaths at Sunnyside.

Very much hurried and abashed was Rollo Lilligood, on arriving at the Hall, to find himself received as a guest in so grand a mansion, and to be ushered into a sitting-room instead of a kitchen. But far more hurried and flurried he was when he found himself in the presence of two females—one of them his old friend Mrs Armitage, looking healthy, and full of spirit and vigour. She was not dying, that was clear; but why he was sent for in such haste was *not* so. During the whole course of the evening no allusion was made to the motive for so sudden a summons; as far as regarded eating and drinking, Rollo was made most comfortable; but he was ill at ease notwithstanding, and the presence of the second unknown female added unaccountably to his tremors. Mrs Armitage had named her as her daughter Mrs Smith, supposed for many years to have perished by shipwreck, but providentially rescued, and turning up 'just in the nick of time,' added the dame laughing; but it was a hollow laugh, and made Rollo shudder.

Mrs Smith was apparently a woman of middle age, much sunburnt and weather-beaten, but, excepting a pair of large black eyes, by no means gentle in their expression, it was difficult to guess what her appearance might *once* have been, owing to the disfigurement of a deep scar or wound on her face, reaching across one cheek—full of wrinkles and seams in consequence! Her voice was harsh, her manner repulsive, yet she evidently tried her utmost to be pleasant, and to appear to the best advantage; but it was when she said 'mother' that Rollo started, for the word grated on his nerves; and when the old woman was irritable and peevish, 'Ellen' looked daggers, but *spoke* honied words. Mrs Smith's eyes followed all Rollo's movements with inquisitorial curiosity; she seemed to be reading his character, or endeavouring to do so; and he, worthy little soul, grew quite abashed beneath the unwonted scrutiny, and had not the courage to respond except by monosyllables. Next morning he was closeted with Mrs Armitage at her desire, and listened to an explanation

and strange recital; ending with her expressing a wish and making an avowal which caused Rollo Lilligood to recoil in amazement and dismay. The substance of the conversation on Mrs Armitage's part was this:—It was not Ellen and her husband who had perished in the wreck, but another Mr and Mrs Smith; Ellen had been left a widow in the new world, but managed her farm alone, as well or better than with her husband's help; and on seeing in the newspapers from England the wonderful account of her mother's inheritance of a large fortune, she had come home at once. Her long silence, her long neglect of her mother, she explained by assurances that she had really written, although the letters miscarried; but then receiving no answer, she had concluded her parent's anger unabated.

'I do assure you, Rollo Lilligood,' continued Mrs Armitage, 'that if Ellen had not brought the certificates of her marriage and birth which she took away with her, I should have hardly been able to identify my own child, for even twenty years could scarcely have altered her so much. The mole on her cheek, too, is destroyed, for that deep gash is right across it: it came from an accident, she says, in felling a tree. Mr Temple behaved very oddly I thought, and was not satisfied for a long time that Ellen was my daughter; till I told him that I *knew* she was so, from proofs indisputable, because she knew things that none save Ellen herself could know. After making a good deal of fuss, looking at the certificates, and what not, he was satisfied as well as myself; and Ellen soon told him that his absence would be better than his presence.' Here Mrs Armitage lowered her voice, and looked round with a timid air, which Rollo had never seen her display before: she continued almost in a whisper, 'I don't know how it is, Rollo Lilligood—perhaps I am going to die—but I don't feel like a mother to Ellen. When I thought my child was dead, I mourned and fretted desperately; but now she is restored to me, I don't feel the old love—for I did love her, though she offended me, Rollo.'

Mrs Armitage then, with much circumlocution, proceeded to prepare Rollo for the tidings she had to communicate, which were to the effect that she desired his marriage with her daughter, thereby securing to him the wealth she had already bequeathed. Rollo was not wanting in sense, and he immediately said with a smile, 'You mean kindly, Mrs Armitage, ma'am, I am sure; but do you think it likely that your daughter Mrs Smith, who *must* have your money anyhow of course, would take such a little ugly fellow as the Sunnisiide shoemaker for her husband, when, with such a fortune, she might pick and choose?'

'She will take you, Rollo Lilligood,' answered Mrs Armitage: 'I told her my will was already made in your favour, and that I wished her to marry you. She is a good obedient child I must say for her in this respect; for before ever she saw you, she promised to do just as I liked. I wish you to be her husband, Rollo; you are a good, honest man; I wish you to have my wealth; I wish her to have it too; and though I must say I am astonished at Ellen agreeing to my proposal so easily, yet, as she has done so, all that remains for you is to ask her to marry you at once, when you are the master of Walmsley, and I shall die happy.'

'Mrs Armitage, ma'am,' answered Rollo decisively, 'if your daughter inherited all England, and all the palaces in it, I would not be her husband.'

It were needless to repeat the violent discussions on the part of Mrs Armitage—on the determined refusal on Rollo's: one thought, and one only, he gave to his beloved son; but the father felt sure that that dear son would never wish to purchase wealth at such a sacrifice on his part. To become that woman's husband! Impossible! thought Rollo. Other thoughts, which he buried in his inmost heart, also crept forward. His rejection was final and decisive. Mrs Armitage discarded him for ever—he should not have a stiver unless he married Ellen Smith! And Ellen herself, what said she on hearing that she was rejected by the shoemaker

of Sunnisiide? She said nothing; but her look so thoroughly alarmed and petrified the nervous little man, that he took French-leave of Walmsley instantly, nor felt himself secure till he stood beneath his thatched roof once more with young Rollo beside him. The latter, on hearing the Arabian-Night like details, was at first serious and attentive; but when his father came to the proposal of marriage, and his terror of the lady, and rejection of the fortune and honour together, Rollo junior indulged in the loudest and longest laugh that he had ever known since his birth. His father's slight seemed to tickle his fancy immensely; but when they talked over the matter soberly, both father and son came to the same conclusion. What that conclusion was, they religiously kept to themselves, nor did either of them indulge a regret for the wealth thus lost when almost in their grasp.

'Rollo,' said the elder, 'that woman Ellen Smith is'—Here he paused.

'What, father?' said his son, looking on the pale speaker.

'A fiend in woman's form, or I am much mistaken. But we'll "bide our time;" and be thankful I have escaped, my son!' ejaculated poor Lilligood, heaving a deep sigh—a sigh of relief. 'And we will keep all these matters to ourselves, my dear boy; for it is women only who love gossiping, and you and I are wise men, though we be but poor cobblers.'

It was nearly twelve months subsequent to Rollo Lilligood's visit to Walmsley when, on a tranquil summer evening, an aged man, with venerable silvery locks flowing on his shoulders, arrived at the quiet village of Sunnisiide. He was a missionary from distant lands, and the best years of his life had been devoted to the conversion of the heathen in the new world. Now worn out, he came home to die, and to rest his bones in the churchyard of Sunnisiide beside his kindred. Rollo's deceased wife had been the aged man's grandniece, and Rollo was the only one of his family left with whom the pious labourer could claim affinity. In his society—shared by the whole village—the newspapers at the Sunnisiide Arms were now neglected; and it is probable that the parties most interested might not have heard the tidings they conveyed, had not the landlord happened to glance his eye over them, and being aware of Rollo's visit to Walmsley, he bustled with the intelligence to his friend the worthy little shoemaker. The country-side rang with the horrible story—a daughter had been arrested on suspicion of attempting to poison her own mother, whom she had already almost killed by a course of ill usage. Fortunately the attempt had failed, but 'Ellen Smith' was in custody, and Mrs Armitage of Walmsley Hall was her intended victim. The article entered into further particulars concerning Mrs Armitage's succession to the fortune, her daughter's unexpected reappearance, &c. concluding with an explanation of the means through which the atrocity was discovered—two of the servants appearing as witnesses against Mrs Smith, who, it was known, was to inherit all her mother's wealth, the latter having made a will to that effect.

Much was said on all sides concerning the wickedness of the world in general; and the reverend missionary, who had caught part of the conversation, desisted amply on that subject. But when Rollo told him of his own deep interest in the particular 'wickedness' in question, Mr Peckham, with ready sympathy, requested to hear the full details. Accordingly, when they were alone, Mr Lilligood commenced his narrative, leaving nothing out from first to last except his former kindness to Mrs Armitage. Mr Peckham listened attentively; but when Rollo described Mrs Smith, he inquired with evident agitation from what part of the new world she had come. On Rollo informing him, the missionary solemnly said, 'Wonderful are the ways of the Lord, and how he maketh darkness light! My son, although my memory is failing me, yet I have at this moment a perfect recollection of being

sent for to pray by the sick-bed of a fellow-countryman; and in that distant land the ties of country are almost as strong as those of affinity. He was a farmer, of the name of Smith, a man of weak intellect, and his horror of approaching death almost forced upon me the conclusion that he had led a particularly sinful life. But this was not so, I found, for he had been more sinned against than sinning; and I endeavoured to lead him to the knowledge of our only refuge for the just as well as the unjust. He was closely attended upon by his wife. Now, mark me, Rollo; he told me she was his second wife; that she had been a servant to his first wife and himself for some years, but a convict before then. He called her "Eliza;" I am sure of that. I remember her brutal manner to the dying man, the gash on her cheek, and her dislike to my being left alone with her husband. It was only at intervals that Smith snatched a moment here and there to speak to me of his past life; for when she was by, he appeared cowed and terrified. The last time I ever saw him in life—his wife (who appeared unusually harsh even for her) being called away for a few minutes—he began lamenting his "ill-luck," as he termed it, in having been the husband of two such viragos; for, said he, "My dead wife, Ellen, threw a pruning-knife at *this one*, and gashed her cheek as you see. Ellen was a shrew, but not so bad as 'Liza neither. Ah, sir! if you ever go back to our dear native land, I wish you would find out poor Nelly's mother, and tell the old soul that her daughter named her kindly when she was dying, for they had quarrelled." I promised willingly to do so, if spared, and requested to know the name of Ellen's mother and her place of abode. "Her name is Armitage, and she lives at"—But here Mrs Smith's return stopped our conversation; and when I returned next evening to the farm, the husband was dead.

"Oh, my dear sir," exclaimed Rollo, "my prophetic instincts were not in vain; this is wonderful indeed! I will off to London at once, and find out Mr Temple."

"But Smith is a common name, my son," said the placid missionary, "and there is a possibility that there may be a mistake in our suppositions, though I confess the coincidence is startling."

"We will leave all to Mr Temple, uncle," exclaimed Rollo. And in two days' time he was in Mr Temple's office, and telling his wonderful story.

Mr Temple speedily confronted the accused, quietly saying, "So, Mrs Smith, you have duped us all, it seems; and as Eliza Smith, formerly the deceased Ellen Armitage's servant, you stand convicted of an attempt to poison the said Ellen's mother."

Quite as quietly, and with imperturbable boldness, Mrs Smith replied, "Well, I thought I should be found out some day, and that is the reason why I consented to marry that fool the shoemaker; for if he was lord of Walsley, I should have been lady."

"Now, madam," said the lawyer, "I think it possible you may have to prepare for a second trip beyond seas. Your unhappy victim—poor old Mrs Armitage!—has, I believe, received her death, or at least its acceleration, at your hands?"

"If I had managed better," cried the violent woman, "she would have met with it ere this. Do you think I ever forget that her daughter Ellen *did this*?" pointing to her cheek, livid with rage. "Once I was handsome as herself—people said we were like twin sisters; but I saw her die: I took her place: but oh that I could be revenged in full!"

Mr Temple stayed to listen to no more ravings, but making his best speed to Walsley, laid before the miserable Mrs Armitage the facts of the case, and through whose instrumentality they were brought to light.

Miserable no longer, but lightened of a heavy load, the poor creature cried, "Thank God for this, that she is not my child: the *old love* never came back to my heart: I told Rollo Lilligood so. Ellen, with all her faults, never would have used her old mother as this

woman has done. Poor Nelly!—poor Nelly! So she thought of her own mother when she was a-dying?"

But Mrs Armitage's days were numbered: her spirit was utterly crushed. And once more Rollo Lilligood came to visit her, and to read the words of consolation, which she would listen to from none but him. The second Mrs Smith was transported for life, after having made confession of her fraud and imputed crime. She said that an old English newspaper, containing the account of Mrs Armitage's singular good fortune, had accidentally fallen into her hands; the scheme occurred to her, and seemed so feasible and easy, that she entertained no doubt of being able to carry it out successfully.

In process of time Walsley Hall was well filled with Rollo's grandchildren. These fair little darlings called Mr Temple also 'grandpapa;' for Rollo the second, now a rising barrister, had espoused Miss Temple: he made himself quite sure of not being rejected by his heiress ere he ventured to offer his hand.

A picture of the good missionary, Mr Peckham, hangs in the dining-room; opposite to which is a full-length of Mr Lilligood the elder, engaged in the business of his calling. 'For I am as proud of my father,' said Rollo, 'as I hope my sons will be of me; and may my descendants never suffer those pictures to be removed!'

They were to be seen at Walsley Hall a few years ago—the owner, a great-grandson of Rollo, bearing a wonderful resemblance to the portraiture on the canvas, while in uprightness and kindness of heart the likeness is still more perfect.

CURIOSITIES OF ROGUERY.

AUCTION GANGS.—ESTABLISHED BUSINESS' SWINDLE.

Auction Gangs.—It would appear to an uninitiated observer that property of any description, which has been consigned to an auctioneer for disposal by public sale, which is submitted to public competition, and which can be sold only with the auctioneer's consent and complicity, is pretty sure of producing, if not something like its actual value in the commercial market, at least its value to the parties present at the sale, minus that fair retailer's profit which it ought to be the effect of general competition to reduce to its minimum amount. However reasonable such an expectation, nothing is more uncertain than its realisation in the numerous auction marts in the metropolis. There exists a system of wholesale theft and robbery so widely diffused, and so universally carried into execution, that it is impossible to form any estimate of the plunder, which must be enormous in its aggregate amount, and which forms the daily and hourly booty of a set of heartless and unprincipled harpies, who grow rich and fatten upon the domestic misfortunes of their fellow-men. By the operation of this nefarious system, the apparently fair and honest procedure of sale by public roup is utterly vitiated; and the auctioneer—who in a case of unreserved sale, such as that in which the property is adjudged to the hammer under a distress warrant, has no power either to protect the rights of the unfortunate owners, or to save himself from the degraded position he is forced to occupy—is made the unwilling tool of a set of scoundrels, to whom he is compelled to assign, one after another, articles frequently of high finish and sterling value, for sums paltry in the extreme, if not merely nominal.

Those who have noticed the rapid, almost sudden, growth and expansion of certain brokering chapmen and dealers in articles of furniture, pictures, musical instruments, curiosities, bronzes, vases, and objects of *verté*, must have been often struck with surprise at their miraculously speedy prosperity. The small front shop soon bursts into the back parlour; it then creeps up stairs;

then the proprietor buys out his neighbours, and overflows first on one side, then on the other, with his fast-increasing stock, till at length half the street, or the whole of it, is one huge repository of everything domestic which necessity, luxury, or vanity can demand and industry supply. The course of knavery we are about to describe may serve to moderate the surprise of the observer.

Be it understood, then, that there exists a species of federal union, never talked about, yet open to all whose trade it is to buy by auction for purposes of retailing. The primary object of this union is, to suppress and prevent that competition which it is the purpose of public sale to elicit. As a general rule it may be affirmed that of this union every broker, dealer or buyer by trade, whose principle of integrity is not sufficiently strong to resist the temptation, is, tacitly at least, a member. And indeed, however honest a dealer may be, he is often compelled in self-defence to wink at the proceedings of the gang, even though he refrain from participating in their vile gains. We must not be supposed to infer that this iniquitous confederation is organised upon any regular system—that it boasts of any rules or written documents of any kind. Such a tangible embodiment of its principles would of course be fraught with peril to the parties concerned, and is therefore avoided. The phrase ‘honour among thieves’ expresses the sole law by which the proceedings of its numerous members are regulated; and though they often quarrel bitterly over the division of the spoil, and have been seen to fight furiously for their imagined rights, they are never known to have recourse to the law for protection. From all we can gather concerning the origin of this foul conspiracy—and we have taken some pains in the investigation—it would appear that it has been of slow and gradual growth, and that it was, in the first place, the spontaneous offspring of the cupidity and dishonesty of a very limited group of confederated rascals. It is affirmed—with what truth we know not—that it was first detected in operation among the Jews of a certain locality, and that it was immediately imitated on all sides, instead of being suppressed, as it might have been by the strong arm of the law and the force of public rebuke, had the infernal machinations of its members been made known. However this may be, it is pretty certain that since its first rise, which might be dated at less than a score of years back, it has spread like a pestilence to every part of the metropolis; and that, at the present moment, it cannot be predicated with absolute certainty of any auction-room situated between Knightsbridge west and Mile-end east, or Highgate north and Peckham south, that on any given day in the year there shall be a fair sale of any specified kind of portable property. If the *gang* be present—and they are always present if the property to be disposed of offers them any considerable advantage—they will be sure to accomplish two things: in the first place, they will get most of the lots they desiderate knocked down to them at a low bidding; and in the second place, they will prevent any stranger who is not a professional buyer from obtaining any article for a sum much less than double its value.

On a certain day in the year 1847—we do not choose, for certain reasons, to be more particular as to date—we attended a sale, where, among other valuable species of property, a pretty large collection of pictures was to be sold. Our object was to purchase a clever production of Fuseli's, should it fall within the limited range of our pocket. Being pressed for time, we had not leisure to change an old office coat in which we had sat all the morning, and consequently made our appearance at the saleroom in somewhat seedy trim—to which accidental circumstance may be doubtless attributed the revelation we have to make. It should be mentioned that the property was that of a defunct dealer, and that his widow was then in the house awaiting with anxious heart the result of the sale, upon the proceeds of which her prospect of future comfort depended. We found the rostrum of the auctioneer surrounded by the *auction gang*, among whom, all unconscious of their honourable fraternisation, we with considerable difficulty shouldered our way, and obtained a standing position in front of the

revolving easel upon which the paintings were then exhibiting to the crowd of bidders.

‘Are you in?’ said a greasy, grizzly-bearded face, reeking over our shoulder.

‘Yes, thank Heaven, we are in,’ said we, mistaking the purport of the question.

‘Oh, it's all right,’ said the questioner, turning to those behind him: ‘he's in.’

We need not detail the whole of the conversation we overheard—enough to say that we soon discovered something of the nature of the conspiracy, and saw its profitable but villainous operation in full swing. Most of the pictures of greatest value were knocked down at wretched prices to three or four members of the gang; and once when a stranger endeavoured to secure a piece of some merit, the biddings were run up against him to an amount far beyond its utmost value, until he ceased to bid, when the lot was knocked down to one of the gang, who immediately repudiated his bidding, and swore that he did not intend to bid more than a certain sum. After some squabbling, the lot was put up again, and bought by the gang against the stranger for far more than its worth. Once when we hazarded a bidding for the lot we came to purchase, we were stopped with, ‘Shut up, you fool; that's —'s bidding: hold your mouth—you'll get it for nothing if you want it at the *knock-out*.’

‘At the *knock-out*!’ we mentally ejaculated; ‘what upon earth is that!’ We had heard the expression before, though casually, and it had escaped our memory; but we resolved this time, if possible, to penetrate the mystery, and learn whether it really was what we already began to suspect it to be.

‘And where,’ said we in as careless a tone as we could assume, ‘does the *knock-out* come off this time!’

‘Oh, at the old place; at —'s back-room up stairs.’

‘What! C— Court!’ (This was a leading question, as we knew no one at C— Court.)

‘No; at W— Street.’

‘To-night of course!’

‘To be sure—half-past eight or nine.’

We did not fail, shortly before nine o'clock, to ascend the stairs to the back-room of the house indicated in W— Street. Before the hour had struck, the whole of the gang was present, and comprehended a much larger number than we had expected to meet. Among them we recognised several owners of first-rate shops, men of property and capital—one especially, who had recently portioned his daughter with thousands, along with others of *undoubted* respectability. Seating ourselves near the door, and calling for grog on the principle of doing at Rome as Romans do, we awaited with interest the result of the proceedings. A number of the smaller and more valuable paintings—gems of the Italian and Flemish schools—a few English specimens, and several finely-wrought vases and bronzes, had been already ‘cleared,’ and deposited in the old-fashioned window-recesses, and upon tables in the room. As it was now past the hour, and all were supposed to be present, the door was closed upon the ejected waiter, and the ‘*knock-out*,’ which, as we had suspected, was nothing more or less than the *real sale* of the property, commenced. An individual, whom we shall designate Smash, whose vampire-looking physiognomy is too well known to the frequenters of certain salerooms, was the unlicensed auctioneer of the evening. Catalogues being produced, all the lots bought by the gang were gone over *seriatim*, and now for the first time put up to serious competition. One by one they were knocked down to eager purchasers at prices varying from double to ten times the sums for which they had been obtained but a few hours before. Cash was paid down for each lot as it was sold, and deposited in a small tray in front of the seller, the lots, or an order upon the auctioneer for such lots as had not been cleared, being delivered to the respective purchasers. When the whole of them had been disposed of, the mass of gold and silver in the tray had accumulated to a considerable size. Smash then resigning the hammer, reimbursed from the heap before him the parties who had cleared the lots present—those who had purchased lots yet in the custody

of the auctioneer having of course paid to the heap the difference only between the final biddings at the sham sale and the real one. These payments concluded, a considerable sum, the produce of that day's diabolical robbery of a forlorn and widowed woman, remained to be divided among the wretches who had thus successfully combined to plunder the helpless. When the sale was over, we could not help remarking that the whole of the property rested finally in the hands of three or four persons—Smash being one of them, as he had bid pretty freely, and consigned several good lots to himself. A few of the articles which had been run up to a high price, in opposition to parties who, not being in the gang, had presumed to bid against it, hardly realised half the sums they had cost; but the loss upon these was compensated tenfold by the gain upon the remainder. And now came the division of the spoil, which was eventually managed upon a principle too complex to be fathomed by a casual observer. We noticed, however, when Smash read over the schedule, which occupied some time in preparing, that the individuals who had paid most money were to receive the largest share; and that those who bought nothing, and most probably never intended to buy, were to be paid at a lower rate. We did not witness the final distribution of the cash. Having no desire to pollute our fingers by the touch of such ill-gotten gain, we feigned a sudden excuse for quitting the room; and requesting our grizzled friend to take charge 'for two minutes' of our untasted grog, we quitted in sovereign disgust this den of ill-doers, who wanted only the virtues of personal courage and outspoken sincerity to elevate them to the level of the burglar and the highwayman.

It is some years since we became thus aware of the existence of this atrocious system of plunder, and we have since frequently detected it in operation where we little expected to meet it. At book-sales it is a perfect nuisance. There are several scores of petty scoundrels who pass their lives at book-auctions, rarely bidding, and never buying if they can avoid it, and whose sole means of subsistence is this meanest of all possible modes of plunder. From inquiries we have cautiously made—for it is not an easy matter to obtain reliable information from the parties implicated—we are induced to believe that the majority of the real buyers would be glad to abate the practice, or put it down altogether, if possible. They find that where, as is generally the case with regard to books, the separate purchases are rarely of any great value, the trouble and inconvenience the practice entails are not compensated by the profit it affords: but the miserable wretches to whom such stolen scraps are daily bread, stick too hard upon their skirts to be readily got rid of.

It is a melancholy thing, and one that speaks volumes upon the demoralising effect of bargain-hunting upon the character, that among these plunderers of the weak, the friendless, and the prostrate in circumstances, should be numbered names of respectable standing in commerce—names well known and trusted among connoisseurs and collectors of works of art, relics of antiquity, or objects of vertu. But there is unhappily no margin left for doubt upon the subject. It would be in our power, on any given day, in the course of a few hours' visit to some of the finest collections of the first-class dealers in such matters in the metropolis, to pitch upon a score or two of valuable specimens which have come into the possession of the present owners through the scandalous medium of the 'knock-out.*' These men, be it remembered, have not the plea of necessity to advance in mitigation of their acts: they are surrounded with the materials and appliances of luxury, and have wealth at command, and might reason-

* We have this day seen a very valuable painting, bought by one of these gangs at a late sale of the property of a deceased proprietor, for a sum hardly covering the cost of the frame and the materials used in painting. What it realised at the 'knock-out,' and what was consequently the amount of plunder shared among the gang, we were not able to ascertain. One thing we can state with certainty, and that is, that the present custodian of the picture (it would be an abuse of language to call him the proprietor) demands above a thousand guineas for it; and, considering its rare quality and transcendent merit, seems not unlikely to obtain the sum he demands.

ably be expected to set an example of honesty in the pursuit of a profession which is sadly in want of it.

The 'Established Business' Scindle.—Just on the same principle as the American backwoodsman locates upon a plot of savage territory, fells the forest timber, burns the lumber, ploughs and sows the reclaimed land—then sells the whole clearing, stock, lot, and coming crop, to some wandering emigrant in search of a settlement—so in London there is a class of men (and, we may add, of women too) whose favourite occupation it is to open new shops, and dig out, as it were, new channels for the currents of commerce, in the yet untried neighbourhoods of the ever-increasing metropolis; selling their newly-formed establishments so soon as they are set a-going, and in a fair way of success, either to new-married couples, country immigrants, or other parties whom they may suit. Against such a mode of gaining a livelihood, however singular it may appear to some, nothing can be justly said. These parties are often of essential service to the community, to whom they frequently introduce the conveniences of retail trade in localities which, without their speculative enterprise, would long remain strangers to them. They are the pioneers of traffic, whose mission it is to clear the way for the commercial host which has in due time to follow in their footsteps. They owe their success (and most of them are successful) to the possession of a rare tact and discrimination in reference to business matters, as well as to a considerable amount of that constitutional energy and restlessness which so remarkably characterise their prototype of the 'far west.' But as everything successful in London is sure to give birth to its counterfeit, so in this peculiar walk of life there are hundreds of unprincipled knaves who make a prey of the stranger and the inexperienced by the sale, under lying pretences, of mock establishments, whose pretended returns have no existence save in the records of a set of plausible account-books, artfully made up for the purpose of defrauding the unwary.

We shall more effectually expose the *modus operandi* of this sort of swindlers by a brief recital of what actually occurred to a friend of our own who unhappily fell into their clutches, than by any formal description that could be given.

In the year 184-, Walter S— found himself, at the demise of his last surviving parent, under the necessity of seeking a livelihood. With youth, health, and a tolerably good education, and with £600 in his pocket, he left his native place, and came to London to prosecute his fortune. After pushing his inquiries in town for near three months, without finding anything to suit him, he began to turn his attention to the morning papers, and to con the advertisements with a degree of interest which can only be appreciated by those who have been in similar circumstances. At length, lured by the prospect of a good income in return for very moderate exertions, he applied personally at the office of a house-agent in Oxford Street, who had advertised his business for sale. The office was a sort of semi-shop on the ground-floor, at the west end of the street; and though bearing a remarkably neat and genteel appearance, had withal a somewhat worn and business aspect. This he thought looked well. Having made his purpose known to the single clerk, that functionary touched a bell, which brought out the principal from an inner chamber—a sober, rather sad-visaged, well-dressed individual, of about five-and-thirty, in deep mourning. Upon making known the object of his visit, and referring to the advertisement in the 'Times' of that morning, the advertiser demanded whether it was the intention of his visitor to purchase the business for himself, or was he merely making inquiries on behalf of another person? S— replied that he was acting solely on his own account, and that, if the business bore out the terms of the advertisement, it was his intention to make him an offer.

'I could easily satisfy you,' said the other, 'that this business would have justified me in employing much stronger terms of recommendation; but the fact is, that although I have doubled the returns since I bought it myself, I have no wish to recover more than the money I paid for it—the death of a relative having released me

from the further necessity of any business occupation at all. But I fear you are too late; I parted with a gentleman not an hour ago who has all but decided upon taking it. It is a pity you did not apply before: I cannot say anything decisive on it at present. Good-morning, sir.'

'Good-morning;' and S— had already reached the door, disappointment in his face, when the other cried, 'Stop; you may give me your address. It is possible the first applicant may not conclude the affair. It strikes me, from some remarks he let drop, that he may not have the cash at hand, in which case I will let you know the day after to-morrow. By the way, we may as well understand each other—you will allow me to ask you if you are prepared to pay cash down, or at what date, supposing we should do business together?'

'Why,' said S—, 'I had not resolved to offer you the exact amount you demand; but I will say this, that if, after full investigation of the business and returns, we should deal, it will be for cash.'

'In that case,' said the agent, 'you shall have the preference if the party who has just left does not conclude the purchase. Perhaps you will look in at eleven the day after to-morrow, and thus save time.'

S— promised he would do so punctually, and departed, not without hopes of becoming yet the proprietor of so snug a concern.

At eleven precisely on the day appointed S— opened the office door. The principal was standing at the desk in earnest, almost angry discussion with an elderly man of gentlemanly garb and manners. He nodded to the new-comer, and motioned to his clerk to show him into the private room, which was so situated that S— could not avoid hearing every syllable that was uttered in the office. He soon became aware that the stranger was the first applicant whose rivalry he had so much dreaded; and he heard with secret satisfaction, that though eagerly desirous of securing the business, he was not in a condition to pay down the required sum upon taking possession. He pleaded hard to be allowed to make a deposit of part of the purchase-money, by way of binding the bargain, offering three hundred pounds in cash, and the rest in bills of short date. This the agent would by no means allow, and upbraided him with having deceived him in that particular at their former interviews. The stranger retorted, and the discussion grew almost into a quarrel, both parties becoming less ceremonious as the dispute waxed warm. It ended at last in the agent bowing out his would-be successor, who departed muttering his dissatisfaction in no measured terms.

The coast was now clear for S—, with whom, after apologising for the warmth of his language to the stranger, and remarking that it was a singular coincidence that S— should have arrived just in time to witness their disagreement, an arrangement was entered into for examining the books and testing the present state of the business. References having been exchanged on both sides, that same afternoon the books of the last two years were gone over cursorily, but carefully, and checked with the annual audits, in a manner, and with a result, perfectly satisfactory to the incoming proprietor. During the examination two parties called and paid L.5 as per-centage on houses let by the agent. Before leaving the premises, at sunset, S— had agreed to spend the ensuing fortnight in the office, as well to test the average returns, as to learn the simple routine of management. The fortnight passed pleasantly enough. The books were left in the hands of S—, who conned them carefully, and never conceived the slightest suspicion of their genuineness. The clerk proved a rollicking out-spoken fellow, fond of cigars and bottled ale, and made no scruple of abusing his employer for not having raised his salary beyond a paltry hundred—affirmed that to his exertions and attention the success of the office was mainly due—and hoped that S—, on assuming the government, would have the liberality to do him justice. There was no lack of business during the period of probation. Parties dropped in with notices of houses and premises to let, for the registry and exhibition of which on the office show-boards they paid willingly, according to a liberal scale of charges. The

principal was absent for hours together every day, and once for two whole days, during which S— had the luck to let a mansion in a neighbouring square for L.180 a year—accompanied the incoming tenant in the examination of the premises, and received from the landlord 5 per cent. upon the first year's rent. In addition to this, business was transacted of a less important character, but which yet yielded a comfortable profit to the agent. As the fortnight drew to a close, it appeared plainly enough that the profits averaged altogether, after paying expenses, nearly L.10 a week; and S— began to think it was a pity that he had not struck the bargain before, and pocketed them himself. When the time was up, and the agent asked him if he was satisfied with what they were doing, and was disposed to conclude the affair, he was but too ready to do so; and the next day a lawyer was called in, an agreement drawn up in due form, and signed by both parties; L.450 was paid down by S—, and bills at short dates were given for L.150 more. The 'agreement for a lease' of the offices, and the landlord's receipts for rents, together with all books and documents connected with the business, were made over to the new purchaser; and before starting for the north to 'take possession of his newly-bequeathed property,' the agent secretly advised S— to get rid of the clerk. 'You will find that you can easily manage the whole affair yourself,' said he; 'and you may as well save the expense of such a fellow, who is likely to prove an annoyance to any one who does not know how to manage him as I do.' This recommendation proved in the result quite unnecessary. S— took up what he now considered his permanent quarters on the ensuing day, and hired a sleeping-room close by for the better convenience of business. But no clerk made his appearance. This did not at first trouble the new proprietor, who attributed his absence to some convivial irregularity, and felt pretty sure of his speedy return. Two, three, four days—a whole week passed, and no clerk—and what, alas, was a thousand times worse, not a single customer! S—, now a prey to awful suspicions of foul play, lived upon tenter-hooks. Another and another week elapsed; and though the stream of population rushed incessantly past the office door, there were hardly more signs of business in the deserted rooms within than in the silent mummy chamber of an Egyptian pyramid. At length, when nearly two months had passed away without the realisation of a single shilling, and S— had become gradually awake to the completeness of his victimisation, a stranger called with a demand for two quarters' rent, and threatened to seize if it were not paid immediately. S— produced his receipts up to the last quarter, which proved to be mere fabrications, signed with a name the same in sound, but differing in spelling from that of the real landlord. From explanations that ensued, and from reference to neighbours, and to the inmates of the upper part of the house, the whole machinery of the abominable fraud, which had been brought to so successful an issue, was made fully apparent. The agent himself, the clerk, the 'prior applicant,' the customers, the gentleman who had taken the house in the square (which house, by the way, belonged to the landlord of that of which the office was a part, and was still unlet), the pretended landlord, who had paid the per-centage on letting—the very lawyer, or supposed lawyer, who had drawn up the agreement—all were partners or creatures of one swindling gang. The books were a set of documents cooked up for the purpose of delusion. Among the scores of notices exhibited on the show-boards, only one was genuine, and that one was in reference to the house in the square, which had been made to play so important a part in the swindle. The others, it is true, indicated houses, shops, and chambers which were actually to let; but they had been copied from similar announcements displayed in other parts of the city, without the sanction of the owners of the premises, and for the purpose of carrying out the fraud. As a termination to this villanous affair, poor S— was fain to evacuate the theatre of his delusion, resigning the furniture and fixtures in consideration of a discharge in full of the landlord's claims for rent, and

to recommence his researches in London for some career upon which he might enter with empty pockets and a little dear-bought experience.

The above is an 'over true tale,' and is but one of a thousand which might be supplied from the private histories of multitudes who have fallen victims to conspiracies of the same class more or less extensive. Every recurring week brings to the metropolis adventurers from the country in search of a location in town, and desirous of investing their hardly-earned savings, or long-expected inheritance, in some established business, or fair speculation, which may offer to honest industry the prospect of competence and respectability. Such will do well to remember that the land-sharks are here on the look-out for their prey, which they will be prevented from gorging only by the exercise of the utmost vigilance and precaution on the part of their intended victims.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BUN-EATING.

An Englishman is considered, in foreign countries, as a sort of philosopher of every-day life. He is supposed to be cold, calm, self-possessed; to pass along the stage of the world with the imperturbable gravity of a Red Indian; to be able to stand up to be shot at, or even married, with the most solemn decorum; and to carry off even his blunders and simplicities with a lofty air of good faith which sets ridicule at defiance. Such is the Englishman as he is commonly represented, for instance, on the French stage; but, although we are by no means disposed to challenge the general resemblance, we conceive it to be a point of honour to admit that in one particular it is defective: it does not truly characterise the Englishman in the act of eating a bun in a pastry-cook's shop.

Every one who is accustomed to resort to such places for something to stay the appetite, which otherwise would rage or languish by dinner-time, must have observed the singular embarrassment betrayed by the customers. It is painful to detect the expedients they are obliged to have recourse to in order to carry off some portion of this awkwardness. One gentleman, fortunate in being near the door, scans curiously the crowd passing along the street, as if he were looking for some one whom he wished to see. Another, farther in, feels a profound interest in a lemonade advertisement hung over the counter, which he has read fifty times before in similar circumstances. A third finds something demanding careful attention in a row of sauce-bottles or preserve-jars on the opposite side of the shop, till, having at length finished his regale, he all at once revives to a sense of the utter worthlessness of his object, pays his bill hastily, and rushes out into the street, delighted to have escaped from so humiliating a position. Dashing young dogs who come in for a shrimp sandwich and a glass of sherry and lemonade, may carry off matters by a gay conversation with the nymph of the counter, whom they rally about the sparkle and effervescence of the beverage, which they wittily conceive to bear some resemblance to the female character. Young ladies, too—usually taking care to enter in pairs or groups—have it in their power, while they absorb their respective jellies, to keep up a colloquy among themselves, rushing into a critical discussion of the merits of the last new novel, or the last miracle of the Opera, or something else intensely abstract and irrelevant to the matter in hand. It is all very well with such fortunately-situated persons; but for the stranger, the unit—the Englishman—who comes in alone to allay a craving appetite, the situation is a trying one.

The pastry-cooks, for their own sakes, should look to it. If they wish to cultivate the stand-up line of consumption, they should get their shops furnished with

something better than lemonade advertisements and rows of pickle jars for the study of their customers. A continual stream of new pictures hung up in proper situations within gazing distance of the lunching public, would, we are convinced, prove an immense attraction. They should not be pictures of single figures or small groups which tell their story at once and away; they ought generally to contain a multitude of figures, and to carry out a somewhat elaborate narrative, as is the case with the works of Hogarth, Callot, and similar geniuses. Not one should be capable of complete perusal in less time than is necessary for the demolition of a common-sized bun. The necessity of a considerable number of such pictures, and of their frequent renewal, must be evident, for a gentleman would soon feel the awkwardness of appearing before the public as taking an ever-fresh interest in one or two particular works of art, however excellent, every day of his life. There must be at least a dozen, and these ought to be changed at least every two months. Many artists would be glad of the opportunity of exhibiting their pictures in this manner, and therefore there could be no great difficulty in effecting the desired alliance between the rival powers of pastry and art. We can even imagine picture-dealers glad to pay a rent to a fashionable bunnist for the privilege of hanging up their wares with prices affixed in such a situation. On this point, however, we do not profess to speak oracularly. All we aim at is, to impress the necessity of something being done for the relief of distressed bun-eaters.

ADDED BY ANOTHER CONTRIBUTOR.

The plan here suggested may be very good as a temporary expedient, but I believe that the only right and thorough remedy for the evil complained of is to be found, where the remedies of so many other things are looked for—in education and the progress of the national mind. We entertain a firm conviction that, with good management, the awkwardness itself will disappear by and by, and the Englishman will be able to eat his bun with all the nonchalance which distinguishes him in the other predicaments of life. Why should this not be so? What is there in a bun, philosophically speaking, which should not be as surmountable to an Englishman as to a Frenchman? In the meantime, however, the Frenchman has the advantage. Look at him, as he enters the shop, sweeping the counter with the severe and lofty glance of a connoisseur! Having made his selection, he goes deliberately to work. He divides his attention between his bun and the company, scrutinising each in turn. He does not stare, however, but look; he does not bolt, but munch; and it is easy to see, by the approving air with which, ever and anon, he turns his eyes upon the diminishing bun, that he is satisfied with the mental analysis he has formed of its composition. He finishes with a gentle sigh of content; smoothes his moustache with the gravity which this act demands, and invariably receives; pays his *trois sous* politely; draws on his gloves with deliberation; touches his hat to the lady of the counter with an *empressment* proportioned to the charms of her face or dress; poises his cane majestically; and walks slowly out into the street.

The cause of this national distinction is, that in England eating is a vulgar necessity, while in France it is a fine art. In the latter country it is associated even with ideas of the soft passion; for when a lover treats his mistress, it is always to something to eat. In the class lower than the gentry (if there are any lower classes in the French Republic), when the gallant walks out with his lady-love, he inveigles her tenderly into the restau-

rant. If they have anything to drink, it is merely a little *vin ordinaire* and water, as an accompaniment to the fricassee. If the day be Sunday, which is the most probable day in the week, it is à *rigueur* that the promenade ends with a quadrille; and this likewise takes place in a restaurant, and a restaurant, too, à *cent couverts*, where the master, even when asked only for a little hot water, to sophisticate the English stranger's *petit verre*, summons his head cook by shouting in a voice of proud command—'Chef!'

With us, on the other hand, eating has no grace, elegance, or dignity—drinking taking its place as the first of social exercises. When promenaders of the same rank as those just mentioned go forth to enjoy themselves, *solus cum sola*, they may walk for miles and hours without any other refreshment than beer or spirits and water. If they break bread at all, it is merely a stale biscuit as an accompaniment to the drink. As for a sister signalling the visit of her brother, who resides in a neighbouring town, by preparing some miraculous piece of cookery for him, to be eaten in an arbour in the garden, with the children round the table—that is a scene we smile at as so like the mounseers! Last holiday we met a couple of Modern Athenians, male and female, going forth into the country for a day's pleasuring. They were genteelly dressed: the lady, more especially, was very lady-like—

'They both were young, and one was beautiful!'

The gentleman, we saw, had prudently provided against the casualties of travel, for a quart bottle protruded undisguisedly from the breast of his handsome coat like a black nosegay!

But look at honest Mr Bull as he goes into a tavern to refresh the inner man, and tell us whether you detect any of the awkwardness you have just witnessed at the pastry-cook's? He surveys the room with the air of a monarch. He establishes himself with quiet majesty in his seat; he sips deliberately, critically, and perseveringly; and looks the world in the face the while like a man conscious of the performance of a meritorious action. Does not this show that Mr Bull has the pluck in him, if it were only properly directed? Are we too sanguine in thinking that the day will come in the progress of this onward-moving age, when he will be able to dispense with pictures at the pastry-cook's? Is there anything wild or visionary in supposing—as we do—that by and by, when called upon to perform publicly the munching of a bun, he will acquit himself with the philosophical calmness he exhibits in the other exigencies of social life?

AN EASTERN INTERIOR.

THE late Mr Charles Heath persisted for about a dozen years in sending an author and an artist to rummage continental Europe for materials, literary and scenic, for one of his splendid annual volumes. One great difficulty was, that the author and artist, having other matters to attend to at home, could not make it convenient to travel together; but even if it had happened otherwise, it is hardly probable that two men of different characters and professions could have seen the same objects with the same feelings, so as to give the requisite harmony to the descriptions of the pen and the pencil. Here is a volume, however, equal in interest as well as appearance to any of the bygone annuals, and written and illustrated by a single individual, skilful to the same degree and in the same way, both as an author and an artist.* Mr Bartlett would have been a

treasure to Mr Heath, and his saving of treasure even in travelling expenses might have prolonged for many years the prosperity of the 'Picturesque Annual.'

The 'Nile-Boat' is one of the most agreeable of all literary picture-books. Its information, though not new, is well selected, and conveyed in a way that gives it the value of novelty; while a brief historical introduction enables the reader to understand the subject without the trouble of study. In short, whether as regards the literature, or the numerous pictorial illustrations, this is emphatically a drawing-room book, and presents an excellent specimen of those intellectual luxuries of the age which are now brought within the reach of families of very moderate means.

We have said that the information conveyed by the book is not new; but this must not be rigidly understood. The author himself, indeed, disavows all claim to originality; but in point of fact the work is a volume of travels, and written by one too intelligent and experienced to follow blindly in the steps of his predecessors. There is, more especially, an 'interior,' as the artists say, which forms a very novel as well as agreeable picture. We have been told much of the difficulty, and, till very recent times, of the danger of a European gentleman visiting the harem of a Mohammedan; but a revolution would now appear to have taken place in Oriental manners, of which Mr Bartlett has been among the first to experience the advantage.

'My visit,' says he, 'had fallen on good, and not on evil times—upon an era of change indeed remarkable and momentous, not only for its immediate, but for its far-reaching consequences, and distinguished for the first insertion into the old Mussulman fabric of the wedge of European civilisation. The Turkish power was broken; the Egyptian flag waved upon the walls of Damascus; planted there, too, far less by the brute valour of the troops of Mehemet Ali, than by the tactics of those French generals (an ominous circumstance, and well deserving the closest attention of our statesmen) who had originally formed, and who in reality commanded them.

'When the rapid victories of Ibrahim Pasha had made him master of Syria, and given him the sudden possession of Damascus, and when he came to establish there his impartial system of administration, by which the Christians could no more (as by immemorial usage had been their lot) be trampled upon by the haughty Mussulmen, it was deemed a fit season to establish, if possible, an English consulate in so important a station. After much opposition, Mr Farren at length entered upon this post with every mark of honour from the local authorities, and by his conciliatory manners, soon contrived to render himself extremely popular among the higher classes. Still, the state of Syria was uncertain and convulsed; a reverse of the pasha's success would bring back into fierce reaction all the Mussulman intolerance; and sudden reprisals on the Christians were apprehended, in whose fate Europeans would naturally be involved. They were thus in a constant state of jeopardy; and although the consul had a town-house, he lived in the suburb of Salaheyih, whence, in case of a popular outbreak, he might easily make good his escape to the mountains. The day after my arrival we visited the city. As our horses clattered through the narrow streets, the crowd sullenly made way for us, and curses, not loud, but deep, were no doubt muttered in the choicest Arabic. Many a filthy dervish, pale with suppressed hate, looked daggers as we passed him by.'

* The Nile Boat; or Glimpses of the Land of Egypt. By W. H. Bartlett, author of 'Forty Days in the Desert.' London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co. 1849.

There was not much to hope for, it might appear, from this state of affairs; but our author found that while the prejudices of the lower ranks seemed to have increased, those of the upper had sustained a change in an opposite direction. 'While such was the sullen fanaticism of the populace, only restrained by the arms of Ibrahim, another spirit was gaining ground among certain of the higher classes. The notorious indifference of the pasha himself to the Moslem institutes, and the liberalism of his European officers, which had infected also the native ones, began to influence certain of the Mussulman aristocracy; and, as extremes commonly meet, while the populace were ready to tear to pieces the Giaours who dared to insult their streets in the odious hat and European dress, some of the higher illuminati took a secret pleasure in showing their emancipation from the prejudices of their forefathers. Of this class principally were the visitors to the consul's house. I was on one occasion engaged in drawing the costume of a native female servant, when a man of some distinction entered—a Moollah of high descent, claiming as his ancestor no less a personage than the father of Ayesha, the favourite wife of the prophet himself. His demeanour was exceedingly grave and dignified, and, as I afterwards remarked, he was saluted in the streets with singular respect. His amusement was extremely great as he saw the girl's figure rapidly transferred to paper; he smiled from time to time, as if occupied with some pleasant idea, of which at length he delivered himself, expressing his wish, to our infinite surprise, that I should come to his house in company with the consul, and take a drawing of his favourite wife.'

This extraordinary invitation occasioned of course great expectation and excitement, and the tryst was anxiously kept. 'At the appointed hour we repaired to the old Moollah's abode. Externally, unlike the houses of Cairo, it presented nothing but a long dark wall upon the side of a narrow dusty lane; within, however, everything bore testimony to the wealth and luxury of its owner. The saloon into which we were ushered was spacious and splendid, marble-paved, with a bubbling fountain in the midst, and a roof supported on wooden beams, highly enriched, and gilt in the arabesque fashion. A large door, across which was slung a heavy leathern curtain, which could be unclosed and shut at pleasure, similar to those adopted in Catholic churches in Italy, opened on the court, from which another communicated with the mysterious apartments of the harem. We seated ourselves on the divan: our host shortly entered, smiling at his own thoughts as before; he doffed his turban and pelisse, retaining only his red cap and silk jacket; he rubbed his hands continually, his eyes twinkled, and he seemed to abandon himself entirely to the merry humour of the moment. A few words had hardly passed before the curtain was gently pushed aside; the lady, like a timid fawn, peeped in, then closing the curtain, advanced a few steps into the room, watching the eye of her husband, who, without rising, half laughing, yet half commanding, beckoned her to a seat on the divan, while we, our hands on our bosoms in the Oriental fashion, bent respectfully as she came forward and placed herself between the old Moollah and Mr Farren. Speaking Arabic well, the latter was enabled to commence a conversation, in which, after some slight hesitation at this first introduction to mixed society, the lady appeared to bear her part with much ease and vivacity. This delighted her husband, who could hardly help expressing his satisfaction by laughing outright, so proud was he of the talents of his wife, and so tickled with the novelty of the whole affair.'

In an Eastern harem, however, there are usually more than one lady of the house; and the reader is doubtless impatient to know what has become of the other members of the family. 'While this was going forward, I observed that the curtain of the door was drawn aside by a white hand, but so gently, as not at first to attract the attention of the Moollah (who sat with his back towards it), and a very lovely face,

with all the excitement of trembling curiosity in its laughing black eyes, peered into the apartment; then another, and another, till some half-dozen were looking over one another's shoulders, furtively glancing at the Giaours in the most earnest silence, and peeping edgewise at the old fellow to see if they were noticed; but he either was, or affected to be, unconscious of their presence, while the consul and myself maintained the severest gravity of aspect. Emboldened by this impunity, and provoked by the ludicrous seriousness of our visages, they began to criticise the Giaours freely, tittering, whispering, and comparing notes so loudly, that the noise attracted the attention of the old man, who turned round his head, when the curtain instantly popped to, and all again was silent. But ere long, these lively children of a larger growth, impelled by irresistible curiosity, returned again to their station: their remarks were now hardly restrained within a whisper, and they chattered and laughed with a total defiance of decorum. The favourite bit her lips, and looked every inch a sultana at this intolerable presumption; whereupon the old man gravely arose, and drove them back into the harem, as some old pedagogue would a bevy of noisy romps. Delivered from this interruption, the lady, at a sign from her liege lord, proceeded to assume the pose required for the drawing. She had assumed for this occasion her richest adornments: her oval head-dress was of mingled flowers and pearls; her long, closely-fitting robe, open at the sleeves and half way down the figure, was of striped silk; a splendid shawl was wreathed gracefully around the loins, and a rich short jacket was thrown over the rest of her attire; her feet were thrust into embroidered slippers, but the elegance of her gait was impaired by her walking on a sort of large ornamented pattens some inches from the ground. It may be supposed I did not keep the lady standing longer than was absolutely necessary. When I had finished, our host, with a smile of peculiar significance, directed her attention to a small carved cupboard, or cabinet, ornamented with pearl, from which she proceeded to draw forth—*mirabile dictu!*—a glass vessel containing that particular liquor forbidden to the faithful; and pouring it out in glasses, handed it to us all; then, at her husband's suggestion, helped herself; and as we pledged one another, the exhilaration of our pious Mussulman entertainer seemed to know no bounds. At the loud clapping of hands, a female slave had entered with a large tray covered with the choicest delicacies of Arab cookery—chopped meat rolled up in the leaves of vegetables, and other and more *recherché* dishes of exquisite piquancy of flavour; this was placed before us on a small stool, together with spoons for our especial use. To complete our entertainment, we were favoured with a specimen of the talents of an Almeh, or singing-woman, confounded by so many travellers with the Ghawazee, or dancing-girls. In long low strains she began to chant a lugubrious romance, probably some tale of hapless love and wo. Her monotonous cadences would have driven Hotspur mad; worse than

"To hear a brazen canstick turned,
Or a dry wheel grate on an axletree;"

but as the story proceeded, the lady appeared rapt, the tears filled her eyes, and she exhibited every sign of the deepest emotion; so different are the modes by which the same universal feelings may be affected.'

Such was Mr Bartlett's peep into an Eastern interior, and it will be admitted that it represents the whole ménage in rather an interesting light. What seemed specially odd to him was, that the favourite wife was by no means equal to the others in those personal charms which are supposed to be all-important with an Oriental. It proved, however, from the information received from the Moollah, that among the Mussulmans, as elsewhere, talent takes the precedence of mere beauty. The hostess *par excellence* was the only individual among them on whom her husband could rely for the invention of amusements to fill up the otherwise dreary monotony

of hours that must be passed without intellectual companionship. She alone could converse with him; and she, therefore, was the wife in the only rational meaning of the word.

LONDON GOSSIP.

'HOMAGE to the mercantile genius of Great Britain!' thus exclaims a French writer in a recently-published article on the export provision trade from the channel ports of France. 'Cargoes of apples were ready to be shipped for London, when orders came to pack them all in chests of uniform dimensions. So, with seven boards, a stroke of the saw, a few nails, and sundry hammer blows, chest after chest was made; and the stowage on board became as rapid as regular. In all this there is nothing that strikes you as beyond the comprehension of continental apple merchants. But John Bull has ordered his fruit-boxes of such dimensions as are required for a corpse of average stature. No sooner are they emptied, than he hands them over to the undertaker; the latter shapes them, makes the old nails serve again; and 300 per cent. is gained in the matter of cheap funerals. Provisions from all parts of the coast are now forwarded under this ingenious envelop, and each season of the year bears to the consumers of London its tribute of eatables and of dead-boxes.'

One would almost fancy this a compliment paid to some of Sam Slick's clever compatriots, rather than to the plodding and unimaginative race who respire under the shadow of the British lion. But it is true, nevertheless, as I have seen with my own eyes; and as the relaxed tariff brings us thousands of rabbits and heaps of cherries from Ostend, tons of butter and cheese from Rotterdam, millions of eggs and bushels of apples from Dunkirk, so there is no lack of coffin-wood to be put underground, and dug up again a few months afterwards by enterprising sextons for firewood. And in this way, as you see, the business connects itself with the question of burial in towns; and this must not be dismissed without a word or two on the Report just issued by the Board of Health 'On a General Scheme for Extramural Sepulture.' This document contains 172 pages, with a map, the latter showing the relative positions of the several metropolitan cemeteries, and indicating some of the remedial projects. The evidence on which the Report is based is similar to what has been before given; no one dreams now of disputing it, except here and there a sprinkling of obtuse entities. The pith lies in a small compass. 'There are,' say the Board, 'in London, situated at various distances from each other, and each differing in extent, 200 centres of more or less pollution, each pouring off unceasingly, day and night, its respective contribution of decaying matter; but the whole together, reckoning only the gases from decomposing human remains, amounting, as we have seen, in one year, to upwards of two millions and a-half of cubic feet.' So much of this deleterious gas remains to be inhaled, that the Board 'submit, therefore, that a case is made out for the total prohibition of interment in the metropolis, on account of the injury resulting from the practice to the public health.' This brings us to the conclusion, that 'if interment in the metropolis is to be wholly discontinued, provision must be made for the removal of 52,000 corpses a year, or of 1000 a week and upwards, to considerable distances from the places at which the deaths occur. Provision must also be made for the decent, orderly, and impressive interment of this number of the dead.'

The Board are entirely of opinion that the present system of funerals, where the undertakers' cry is, 'first come, first served,' should also be suppressed, and the whole management intrusted to one responsible commission of five members, of whom one to be paid. Then it is recommended that it shall be declared 'unlawful to inter in any other place than the public burial-grounds within the prescribed precincts; that the chief metro-

politan cemetery should be in some eligible situation, accessible by water-carriage; that it be unlawful to inter in any burial-ground more than one corpse in one grave; that the price of funerals be regulated according to a series of scales or classes; and that the whole expense of each funeral be included in the charge fixed for its class, and be paid for in one sum.' A most eligible spot (said to be at Erith) is pointed out for the chief cemetery. It is on a dry sandy soil, and can be readily approached by railway or steamboat. Then, to insure speedy removal of corpses from dwelling-houses, it is proposed that 'reception-houses' should be built on both sides of the river, so as to include the parishes from Wandsworth down to Deptford and Blackwall. In these houses the bodies would lie under proper care until the time fixed on for burial. Of course there are details about hearses, coaches, funeral-steamboats, &c. and compensation to the clergy and others who may be exposed to loss by the change. One result of it would be to prevent infanticide, which prevails to some extent under the present system; as infants said to be 'still-born' are buried under cover of night, and no questions asked. The new project presupposes a stringent registration of all births, whether dead or alive; and devoutly is it to be wished that parliament will give the measure the authority of law.

I don't like taking up your time with these sanitary matters, of which you must be well-nigh weary; but so much depends on them, that it is not easy to forbear; and there is a part of the subject which has generally escaped without due attention. It is that of the cow-yards, or 'dairies,' as they are called, so numerous in London. Each one of these is a Smithfield in miniature, a focus of noxious exhalations in quarters where you would least expect it, from courtly St James's to Bethnal Green. Mr Rugg, a surgeon, has lately published 'Observations on London Milk,' and traces many of the evils which afflict poor metropolitan humanity to the adulteration of that essential aliment. What would you think of keeping cows in underground vaults constantly lighted with gas? Yet such is the case. No wonder that London milk is said to give people consumption. Cowhouses generally are dark and ill-ventilated; the insufferable odour of a London dairy is but too well known—a compound of animal and vegetable effluvia of the most noisome kind, with the sour smell of distillers' wash. The adulterating substances are whitening, flour, starch, treacle, annatto, sugar of lead, and brains. Mr Rugg says—'When they (the dairy-keepers) cannot procure sheep's brains, they get those of the ox or cow, and others even from those hotbeds of disease—the knackers' yards. The way they use them for this detestable purpose is by rubbing them up with their hands (which are not the cleanest one would wish to see) with some warm water, and a white, milky-looking emulsion is the result. This is stirred up with the quantity of water which they intend to add to the milk.' This account is enough to make one forswear milk for ever. It appears that the process was imported from Paris, where, as well as in London, rich and luscious cream is prepared in the way here described. The bringing of milk by railway, which now prevails so largely, ought to have the effect of checking this evil. The price paid to country graziers by the town dealers is twopence or twopence-farthing per quart; they retail it at fourpence; so that, when the adulterating diluent is considered, their profit is enormous. I met a farmer in Berkshire lately who sends milk to London daily by the South-Western Railway; he told me that the charge for carriage was ninepence a hundredweight, and that he had opened a retail dairy in Leicester Square. On my asking him whether he put water into his milk, his reply was, 'I am obliged to do it, because if I didn't, it wouldn't be fair to the other dealers;' so that unfairness to the consumer appears to be no part of the question. Mr Rugg proposes to 'register' every milk supplier 'in town or country; whereby, taking London to contain 2,000,000 inhabitants, and supposing

each individual to consume, on an average, half a pint of milk per day, it would require 50,000 cows, producing ten quarts per day each, to maintain the supply of 500,000 quarts per day, or 182,500,000 quarts per year; the rate on the 50,000 cows, at 2s. 6d. per head, would amount, independent of the registrations of the sheds and retail dealers, to L.6250 per annum.' Interference with trade is always objectionable, but it is a question whether some attempt might not be made to put an end to this system of fraud by appointing government inspectors of milk as they have in Holland.

Craving your indulgence for enlarging on this grievance, I pass now to the Astronomer-Royal's lecture at the Royal Institution on the 15th. The subject was terrestrial magnetism, and most luminously was it discussed. It would indeed be hard to find a lecturer to match Mr Airy in this respect; he makes the matter so clear, that it is your own fault if you do not understand it. He showed the present state and prospects of magnetism as a science, defining science to mean, not a knowledge of facts, but a knowledge of the causes—especially the mechanical causes—of observed phenomena; and commented on the simultaneous movements of magnets at observatories widely separated—at the foot of the Ural Mountains, at Greenwich, in Van Diemen's Land; and on the various theories of Hansteen, Gauss, and others, by which the different phenomena are to some extent accounted for. Mr Airy considers that no more expeditions for magnetic observation are necessary; that we have a sufficient collection of facts; and that the most likely means to arrive at a knowledge of causes would be to take any one of the sudden disturbances which occur in the movements of the magnets, and endeavour to trace it to its source, to find out its starting-point, and thus by a tentative process discover what is now so great a mystery. Here terrestrial magnetism rests for the present: the attempts hitherto made to reduce its extraordinary effects to distinctness of form and order, reflect the highest credit on all concerned, and the ascertaining of its causes will be one of the most startling and pregnant discoveries that could well be made.

Among miscellaneous matters is the invention of an 'Air Screamer,' to be fitted in ships, for use as signals in foggy weather, and thereby avoid those fatal catastrophes of running down at sea, one or two appalling cases of which, as you will remember, occurred last year. This instrument can be heard at a distance of four miles. Besides this, it is said that red glass is eminently serviceable in enabling a gazer to make out distant objects in a fog, and may thus become available in the prevention of accidents. The statements on this point require further testing; the explanation offered is, that the bright or white light of fog which wearies the eye, is relieved and neutralised by the coloured glass, so that the full power of sight remains for the examination of what is remote. The North Kent Railway Company are building carriages which will contain ninety-six passengers; according to theory, large vehicles can be moved with less expenditure of power than small ones. It is to be hoped that the comfort of passengers will not be lost sight of; for on some of our lines the space allowed between the seats is so cramped and confining, that it is a misery to travel on them. Your north of Tweed carriages are more conveniently constructed in this respect—in those on French lines you can sit with some degree of comfort. Besides these domestic items, there are two or three from the United States: a railway suspension-bridge over the Niagara river close to the Falls; it is to be hung on 16 cables, of 6000 wires each, laid straight, and 'served,' as sailors say, with thinner wire. The supports will be stone piers, and the structure, when completed, is to carry 6000 tons without flinching. Jonathan will then have something to boast of, as well as we of our Britannia Bridge. Next: the great national hero Washington is to be commemorated in a granite and marble monument, to be erected at Richmond in Virginia, for which

the state legislature has voted 100,000 dollars. Besides this, there is the elaborate and costly monument to the same personage now being erected at the central seat of government—Washington. Good opportunities for transatlantic sculptors: meantime chisellers here talk about them, and wonder what they will look like. And last; rumour is again busy with a discovery said to have been made in New York—that of producing light and heat by the decomposition of water at so trifling an expense, that the cost of warming a house would amount to less per week than to supply its mistress with gloves. I would not advise the English public to give credence to this rumour just yet.

Further accounts have come from Africa of the lake which I have already mentioned as discovered by Mr Moffat junior and some hunters. It 'is situated in longitude 24 degrees east, and latitude 19 degrees south, and its limits appear to have been undiscernible. According to the natives, however, it takes twenty-five days to travel round it. The vegetation on its banks is tropical, and palms are abundant, but it contains no crocodiles, alligators, or hippopotami. It is approached by a river, which for some distance is of small size, and which, as it nears the lake, becomes as large as the Clyde.' There are no islands, except at the mouth of the river, and these are thickly inhabited by a race differing from those on the mainland. Fish is said to be abundant, pelicans also, and a breed of small elephants. Will it be safe to predict that steamboats will be running on this lake before ten years are over, and emigrants busily cultivating its shores?

Among other scientific gossip is the report presented to the Académie by three French chemists on the existence of lead, copper, and silver in sea-water, though in very minute quantities. They find the latter metal also in vegetable tissues; and being desirous to know whether vegetables of the ancient world contained a similar proportion, they experimented on coal, and came to the conclusion that its presence is most clearly demonstrated in modern vegetables. From plants they went to animals, and detected silver in the blood of oxen. Professor Unger, of the university of Vienna, has published 'Physionomic Pictures of the Vegetation of Different Periods of the Primitive World.' This is 'not a series of systematic tableaux, but real landscapes of great beauty, in which regard is had to all the known and presumed circumstances in relation with the subject; due attention is paid to the species of vegetables, to the atmospheric and climatologic conditions, and to the character of the lands and seas of ancient periods, as well as to the terrestrial and marine animals of each epoch.' Such a work as this, passing from the chiaroscuro of the carboniferous period through all the changes up to the tertiary, will be acceptable to general as well as scientific readers; especially to those who are best instructed by the eye.

But I must hasten to a conclusion, or I shall exceed my limit. Another poet has spoken, and we have new poems by Robert Browning, a writer less popularly known than he deserves to be. Tourists, who will begin to be on the alert with the advent of spring, will be gratified to know that the repairs at Caernarvon Castle are complete, and that several others of our favourite Welsh ruins are to be similarly restored at the royal charge. Visitors to London, too, will learn with pleasure that a talk is again brewing about the obnoxious high prices for viewing St Paul's. And apropos of visitors—working-men's clubs are being formed in some of the provincial towns, to raise subscriptions for a trip to town in 1851 to see the much-talked-of National Exhibition—a very praiseworthy project. Not less noticeable are the 'Penny-Banks.' In the one at Hull, 5541 depositors lodged the pence in the bank to the amount of above L.1200 in 182 days; at Greenock, too, there has been equal success. Artisans and operatives could not lay out a portion of their savings better than in travelling a little, and so enlarge their knowledge and experience. And here a passage

so much to the point occurs to me, that I quote for the winding up: it is taken from the recently-published reports of Mr Airy's lectures on astronomy at the Ipswich Museum. The lecturer had arranged that 'persons concerned in the mechanical operations of the town' should be present; and he especially invited the attention of working-men to his remarks, stating that 'the subjects of the lectures would not be beyond any working-man's comprehension. Everybody who has examined the history of persons concerned in the various branches of science has been enabled to learn, that whereas, on the one hand, those who are commonly called philosophers may be as narrow-minded as any other class, and as little informed; so, on the other hand, those who have to gain their daily livelihood by handicraft, may associate their trades or businesses, whatever they may be, with accomplishments of the most perfect and the most elevated kind.'

THE SENSES AND THE IMAGINATION.

It was about this time that coffee began to be generally introduced. Instead of adopting the new beverage, Mr Chalmers invented one of his own—an infusion of burnt rye—which he not only used constantly himself, but urged upon all his guests, strenuously affirming its equality with the best Mocha coffee. Upon one occasion, at Kilmany, Mr Duncan, who had no great relish for his friend's beverage, so stoutly denied this position, that Mr Chalmers declared that the next time he came to Dundee he would subject the matter, in Mr Duncan's own presence, to an *experimentum crucis*, and triumphantly vindicate his own invention. The time for the experiment soon arrived. Mr Chalmers appeared in Dundee, bringing with him a quantity of rye coffee, as he called it, of his best manufacture. The trial between it and its rival was made at Dr Ramsay's, to whose sister the performance of the important experiment had been committed. It was agreed that a select company of connoisseurs should assemble; that Miss Ramsay should furnish each, first with a cup of her best Mocha coffee, and then with a cup of 'the genuine Kilmany;' that each guest should announce his opinion, and that by the verdict of the majority the question of their respective merits should be decided. In the meantime, however, before the trial commenced, Miss Ramsay received certain private instructions, upon which she acted. In due time the company assembled. The coffee being handed round, met with general approbation. The second cup was next presented; by one after another an adverse verdict was pronounced, till it came at last to Mr Duncan, who emphatically exclaimed, 'Much inferior, *very much inferior!*' Mr Chalmers burst into laughter as he replied, 'It's your own Mocha coffee; the second cup is just the same article as the first.'—*Memoirs of Dr Chalmers.*

STRANGE TASTE IN ANIMALS.

It is singular to find, that while in animals each peculiar species has its distinguishing characteristic—as speed in the greyhound, courage in the bulldog, intelligence in the shepherd's colley, and acuteness in the Highland terrier—that there are now and again strange aberrations met with in their tastes, and such as are totally opposed also to natural habits and dispositions. I had a French poodle which would drink grog until he got drunk; but in his latter days he became reformed, for a stupid scoundrel gave Philip a glass of undiluted whisky, scalded his mouth, and from that moment he turned a teetotaler. In 1799, at the Angel Inn at Felton, the landlord had domesticated a hedgehog so completely, that he came when he was called 'Tom,' and made an excellent turnspit. Forty years ago, when Mr Allgood hunted the Tindale country, a guineahen, which had lost her partner, took to fox-hunting to kill grief. She regularly went to a field with the pack, kept a respectable place throughout the day, and always was in at the finish. It was believed that a conjugal bereavement, such as generally drive widows to the altar again, influenced the sporting bird.—*Maxwell's Hill-side and Border Sketches.*

GOODNESS OF NATURE.

Goodness I call the habit, and goodness of nature the inclination. This, of all virtues and dignities of the mind, is the greatest, being the character of the Deity; and without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin.—*Bacon.*

EYE-MEMORY.

BY CALDER CAMPBELL.

When the present all around me
Forms a picture of fair things,
That awake bright thoughts within me—
Fairy shapes and seraph wings—
Then I quench my thirst at fountains,
Fountains of eternal springs.

Fancy sheds o'er all the sunshine
That is bred of pleasant thoughts;
And with pulse that beats unfettered,
Fancy every object notes,
Till each individual aspect
In a sea of beauty floats.

Then the present is before me,
Standing in its field of power,
Till at last the past steals o'er me
As from clouds the falling shower,
While its memories restore me
To another scene and hour.

One brief glimpse at things familiar
To the visions of our youth—
One quaint view of objects common
To our early sense of truth—
One glance at the alien corn-fields
Bringeth back our boyhood's ruth!

Oh it is a mystic wonder
This same memory of the eye,
That with no loud sound of thunder
Pierceth our humanity,
But with force that keeps time under
Houseth up old sympathy!

One small flower, whose shape and colour
Noted to all others is,
Brings a vivid recollection
Of some bygone vale or bliss:
Here a bier, and there a bridal—
There a tear, and here a kiss!

Even upon yon wall the shadow,
As it falleth, calls to mind
Shades of woods where I, a truant,
On the thick green boughs could find
Joys that had no taste of sorrow
With their fruitage intertwined.

Often, as we linger idly
O'er new paths, we come upon
Something—field, or hill, or streamlet,
Windmill, glittering in the sun—
That we knew by frequent visits
Long ago, ere youth was gone.

Yet these scenes are strangers to us,
Though their forms are old and dear;
And Eye-Memory, through and through us,
Runneth like some liquid clear
That is poured from jewelled chalices
By a spirit hovering near.

It were well if recollections
Of the past were always drawn
From the eyes, whose retrospections
Have no tempest in their dawn:
Happy he whose calm reflections
Pass not the paternal lawn!

Happier still if our Eye-Memory,
After travelling far, bring home
Sweet experiences—telling
Of the sadness and the gloom
We have aided in dispelling
From some fainting neighbour's room!

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